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News Release

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Forest Service completing thinning project south of Williams

Williams, Ariz., Oct. 18, 2016—For Immediate Release. Tree removal has begun on a 3,571-acre project on the Williams Ranger District of the Kaibab National Forest associated with the Four Forest Restoration Initiative.

The McCracken Task Order area is located about 6 miles south of Williams in the vicinity of Coleman Lake and McCracken Knolls. A contractor recently started harvesting operations off of forest roads 108 and 728. The McCracken Task Order area is bounded on the north by Forest Road 122, on the east and south by County Road 73, and on the west by Forest Road 42.

As thinning work is implemented, residents and visitors can expect to see heavy equipment and workers in the project area and along haul routes. Log trucks are expected to begin hauling before the end of the month. The major haul routes will be forest roads 108 and 728 feeding into County Road 73 heading north into Williams on 4th Street and then following Route 66 west to Interstate 40 eastbound.

Members of the public are urged to use extreme caution near timber removal and hauling operations. Besides the presence of heavy equipment and log trucks, there will also be trees being felled and stacked into log decks, which can be unstable. Visitors to the area should not camp near nor climb on them, as they often shift and have the possibility of collapse.

The objectives of the thinning operations in the McCracken Task Order area are to reduce fuel loading and the potential for future high-intensity wildfires, to improve forest health and watershed conditions, and to provide wildfire protection for the City of Williams and its surrounding residences.

The goal of the Four Forest Restoration Initiative is to accelerate the pace and scale of restoration within 2.4 million acres of ponderosa pine forest in northern Arizona to increase resilience and proper functioning. Restoring this fire-adapted ecosystem is accomplished with a suite of restoration activities – from watershed maintenance and habitat improvements to prescribed burning and thinning.

For additional information on the Four Forest Restoration Initiative, visit www.fs.usda.gov/4fri. Follow the Kaibab National Forest on Twitter and Facebook @KaibabNF.

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